



State of Connecticut

African-American Affairs Commission

State Capitol

210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509

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Senator Winfield, Representative Butler, Senator Osten, Representative Rose, Senator Hwang and Representative Kupchick and other members of the housing committee. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of your today. My name is Subira Gordon and I am the legislative analyst for the African American Affairs Commission. The mission of the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut. Today I would like to thank you for giving HB 6461 AAC the data collection and analysis of affordable housing, HB 6462 AA establishing a rental assistance pilot program and HB 6640 AAC allocations of low income housing tax credits a public hearing.

The AAAC supports HB 6461, which would improve the data collection and analysis of affordable housing because, currently there is no comprehensive list of subsidized housing in the state. It is important for housing policy moving forward to have all the information necessary in order to fully analyze where individuals who are receiving subsidized housing are located. With the information that is currently available we do know that Connecticut is a very segregated state with a large percentage of minorities living in a small area which is poverty-concentrated, under-resourced, and mainly concentrated in the cities. We believe that all state agencies that provide subsidized housing should work with the Department of Housing to compile a report on the location of subsidized housing and who it serves; however we do understand that there are some

Our Mission

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restrictions due to medical privacy and we respect those. The best public policy is made when there is ample information available to make the best decisions.

Next I would like to provide testimony in support of HB 6462. This bill would establish a pilot program to provide counseling and resources to families who are looking to move into higher opportunity areas than the ones that they currently reside in. Nationally mobility counselling has been a successful program and we would like to see this happening in Connecticut as well. With approximately 80% of voucher holders living in high poverty areas, mobility counselling would be a beneficial tool that would assist some of these families to move to higher opportunity communities and break the cycle of poverty. By establishing a pilot program that provides comprehensive mobility counselling which would continue post move families will have a support system to help them relocate to a new community and hopefully stay there for many years. We would like to ensure that this program does have a reporting component in order to keep track of these moves and determine if families are staying in these higher opportunity areas or moving back after a while. There is mobility counseling in the state so this pilot would be expounding on the current program and making the improved counselling available to a small number of families. Moving a family to an area with less crime, better schools, access to jobs and transportation can change lives for generations to follow.

Finally HB 6640 would specify criteria for allocating federal low income housing tax credits. The LIHTC program is currently helping to provide housing in areas that are disproportionately high poverty and disproportionately minority. (73% of units built with LIHTCs are in areas that are high poverty) This bill would give priority to higher opportunity economic areas when allocating low income housing tax credits in order to help grow affordable housing stock in areas where residents would have access to thriving schools and more economic opportunities.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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